

REMARKS

Claims 19-24 and 26-43 are now present in this application, with claim 25 being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein, and with new claims 37-43 being added by the present Amendment. Claims 19 and 37 are the sole remaining independent claims in connection with the present application.

Claim Objections

Initially, the Examiner has objected to claims 29-36 as being of improper dependent form. The Examiner indicated that claims 29-36 were dependent upon claim 10, which was a cancelled claim, and accordingly requested that the claims be corrected by the present amendment.

In response thereto, claim 29 has now been amended to depend from claim 20, which is an existing claim in connection with the present application. Accordingly, claims 29-36 are now in proper form for U.S. practice and thus, withdrawal of the Examiner's objection and treatment of these claims on the merits in connection with the present application is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner has rejected claims 19-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In the Examiner's rejection, the Examiner alleges that there is inconsistency between the language in the preamble drawn to an apparatus for equipping a substrate with electrical components, and the body of the claim, referring to components. The Examiner was apparently unsure of the relationship between the apparatus and the components. The Examiner has a

similar problem with the language of claim 20, including the language of “wherein the components are fixed at the holding end of the at least one gripper”. Finally, regarding claim 25, the Examiner objects to the phrase “grid-like fashion”. These rejections are respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Initially, Applicants note that claim 19 has been amended in an effort to place it in better form for U.S. practice, and in an effort to incorporate the majority of the language of allowable dependent claim 25. Applicants have attempted to remove several portions of the claim, and to revise independent claim 19 to make it more understandable. The claim is directed to an apparatus for handling electrical components, and not to a combination of an apparatus and components. The apparatus is for, among other features, picking up components by the use of at least one gripper of the apparatus, wherein the picked up components may be deposited in storage spaces of the storage element of the apparatus and/or removed from the storage spaces of the apparatus. Thus, the claim is directed to an apparatus including both at least one gripper and at least one storage element, and not to an apparatus and components. Applicants believe that claim 19 has been clarified and respectfully withdrawal of the Examiner’s rejection.

Claim 20 has also been amended in an effort to clarify the claim, especially taken in context with independent claim 19. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner’s rejection is respectfully requested.

Finally, with regard to claim 25, the term “like” has been removed from the claim, when incorporating a majority of its language into independent claim 19. Again, withdrawal of the Examiner’s rejection is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Initially, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 25-28 contain allowable subject matter. In the present Amendment, although claim 19 has been amended in an effort to slightly broaden the claim and in an effort to clarify claim language, claim 19 has been amended to incorporate a majority of the language of claim 25 and thus is believed to be allowable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection and allowance of claim 19 in connection with the present application is respectfully requested.

Prior Art Rejection

The Examiner has rejected claims 19-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,743,005 to Nakao et al. This rejection has been rendered moot in view of the incorporation of the allowable subject matter of claim 25 into independent claim 19.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 19 and all claims dependent thereon, are allowable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection is respectfully requested.

New Claims

In addition, Applicants have added new claims 37-43 in connection with the present application. Applicants respectfully submit that these new claims are also allowable over the prior art of record.

Specifically, new claim 37 states that both the at least one storage element and at least one gripper of the equipping head of the apparatus are each relatively movable with respect to

the other within the equipping head. In Nakao et al., even assuming *arguendo* that there is an equipping head with at least one gripper and at least one storage space, which Applicants do not admit, the alleged storage spaces 3 of Nakao et al. are just assigned various feeding devices and are not movable or relatively movable with respect to any grippers, contrary to that claimed. The components in Nakao et al. are transferred in a time consuming one-by-one fashion from storage spaces of the feed device to the remote substrate. Thus, for at least such reason, Applicants submit that new claim 37 is over allowable over the prior art of record.

Still further, Applicants have added additional new claims 38-43, which are allowable for at least reasons previously presented regarding claim 37, and further for the limitations present therein. For example, claim 38 indicates that the number of storage spaces is greater than the number of grippers, which is another feature not taught or suggested by Nakao et al.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that each of dependent claims 38-43 is also allowable over the prior art of record.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of all outstanding objections and rejections and allowance of each of claims 19-24 and 26-43 in connection with the present application is earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

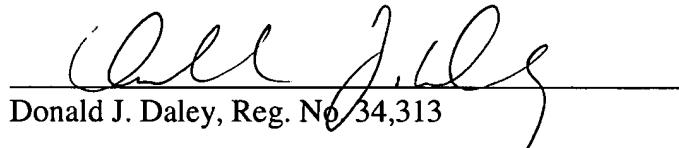
Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicants hereby petition for a two- (2) month extension of time for filing a reply to the outstanding Office Action and submit the required **\$410.00** extension fee herewith.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By


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Attachment: Fee Transmittal;
Check for fee(s) payment.